



September 6, 2018

Senate Transportation Committee
Lansing, MI

Re: SB 964

Dear Committee members,

The Michigan Environmental Council (MEC), a coalition of more than 70 member organizations across the state, has long been involved in the discussions surrounding billboards in the state. Though this bill does increase the ability of the Department to enforce the law, overall the bill is a step backward in the state ability to properly regulate billboards.

MEC has concerns with three provisions in the bill. First is the new provision regarding the state giving back interim permits that were turned in in exchange for digital billboard permits. The original intent of the current billboard law was to work to reduce the overall number of signs in the state. This provision does not work with that intent as it reinserts more permits into the system.

Secondly, we have concerns with new sections allowing a sign to be moved if a highway is closed for 120 days and is exempt from a fee if the renewal happens during that period that the road is closed. Since the renewal period is one of the major times that a permit can be lost, exempting a permit renewal during what is a relatively short period is concerning to us. It is important that the fee renewals continue unless the highway is closed for a significant period of time.

Finally, we are opposed to the new exemption surrounding sign heights in cities with a population of more than 600,000. The current height rules make sense across the board, and an exemption should not be made for what seems to be a very specific circumstance.

We appreciate the continued discussions on this bill and the positive movement on enforcement, but overall the bill makes many negative changes and we are opposed at this time.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sean Hammond". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sean Hammond
Deputy Policy Director